



ST. JEROME'S UNIVERSITY

St. Jerome's University in the University of Waterloo

Department of English

Fall 2021

ENGL 335 – Introduction to Creative Writing

Tuesdays, 6:30 – 8:00 pm and asynchronous

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: Claire Tacon
Office Hours: By appointment
Email: ctacon@uwaterloo.ca

COURSE DESCRIPTION

What makes a piece of writing grab your attention? What makes it stay with you long after you've read it? Why are others almost instantly forgettable? Through a series of creative investigations, students will explore how poems and stories affect us, looking for tools to make their own writing burrow into the reader's skin.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

In this course, we are working towards:

- A. Improving writing skills in poetry and fiction
 - Understanding common techniques and finding interesting ways to apply them
 - Reading published examples to understand how the author has achieved various effects
- B. Developing a stronger critical eye
 - Providing workshop feedback to peers
 - Analysing our own revision process
- C. Greater understanding of the contemporary Canadian literary landscape
 - Introduction to literary journals, small presses and reading series

REQUIRED TEXTS

All required readings are available online and through course reserves and will be posted on LEARN. Please refer to the course schedule to see which ones are due before each class.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND ASSESSMENT

Writing Portfolio (25% of final grade)

Throughout the course, you will be building a portfolio with all of the writing you create during the term. This portfolio will include drafts started in class, as well as your "extender exercise" drafts. You are also welcome to add point-form explanatory notes on why you made the artistic choices you did. If you find that you have written something that is more private, you have the option to redact portions. You will be graded on the completeness of your portfolio and on the risks you take with pushing the work further.

Due dates:

October 20 (for all writing assignments up to that point)

December 9 (for all remaining writing assignments)

Revision (25% of final grade)

Pick one piece that you are going to thoroughly revise. You will get peer feedback on it, as well as instructor feedback. There are two points in the term when you can hand in your work to me for instructor feedback: October 26 or November 30. Pick the hand-in date that is most convenient for you.

In your revision, I expect to see significant experimentation and a clear jump from the initial draft to the revised version. Please refer to the revision examples provided on LEARN—changing one or two lines will not result in a high grade. Please make effective use of your author-led workshop time to get the feedback most useful to your revision (either synchronously or asynchronously).

You **must** complete a revision analysis sheet (available on LEARN) to accompany your revision. The revision will be marked on draft quality and on the depth of your revision analysis.

Submission dates for peer feedback:

Tuesday, October 5 by midnight

Sunday, November 14 by midnight

Submission dates for instructor feedback:

October 26 or November 30 (pick one)

Final revision due date:

December 9 (you may also submit earlier in the semester, provided your work has received peer and instructor feedback)

Reading Journal (25% of final grade)

Your asynchronous classroom activities are all reading responses. You are expected to complete the reading journal provided on LEARN, in advance of each class. Reading responses should be handed in on a weekly basis. You will be graded on the completeness of the journal and on your level of engagement with the text. You will receive a grade on the readings halfway through the term as well as at the end.

Reading responses should be submitted before class each week, according to schedule above (also available on LEARN and on the library course reserves)

Marks returned:

October 22 (for work up to that point)

December 10 (for remaining readings)

Workshops Sheets and Peer Discussion (25% of final grade)

There are two workshops this semester. You will be placed in groups of 6-8 students and are expected to read each submission and to complete a workshop sheet for each writer. If you are able to join synchronously you will also be expected to participate in an author-led discussion of the work. If you can only join asynchronously, you will be expected to answer any follow-up questions from the author in one of the LEARN discussion forums. You will be graded on the generosity and depth of the peer feedback you provide. If you are late with submitting either your draft or your feedback, the penalty will be deducted from this grade.

Workshop Sheets due dates:

Monday, October 18 by 9:00am

Sunday, November 21 by 9:00am

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week	Date	Topic	Readings Due (links on LEARN and in reading journal)
1	Sept 14	Introduction / List poems	
2	Sept 21	Scavenging for Words: found poetry and sound play	Craft reading: Poetry Foundation article "How to Make a Poem" Literature Readings: "Boreal Swing" by Liz Howard "Influence is Infinitely Circuital" by Madhur Anand "Famous" by Naomi Shihab Nye
3	Sept 28	Where We Live Now: setting and line breaks	Craft Readings: Poetry Foundation article "Learning the Poetic Line" "The 6 S's" by Catherine Wagner Literature Readings: "Everything Must Go" by Raoul Fernandes "Budapest" by Billy Collins "let poems be mist" by Craig Santos Perez
4	Oct 5	A Knack for Knick-knacks: metaphor, connotation and object-based writing	Craft Reading: Poetry Foundation article "Learning About Figurative Language" Literature Readings: "Russian Figure" Significant Objects "27-year-old Crust..." Museum of Brokenships "Blue" by Maggie Pahos
		<i>Reading week</i>	
5	Oct 19	Peer workshops	Craft Reading: "On Seeing and Being Seen: the difference between writing with empathy and writing with love" by Alicia Elliot
6	Oct 26	Lying Through Our Teeth: Character development and research	Craft Reading: "What Writers Really Do When They Write" by George Saunders Literature Readings: "Surrounded by Sleep" by Akhil Sharma "You Are So Embarrassing" by Souvankham Thammavongsa
7	Nov 2	Wish You Were Here: Postcard fiction and working with constraints	Craft Reading: Poetry Foundation article "The Choice of Constraint" Literature Readings: "We Are Electric" by Kellee Ngan "Spring Training" by Mark Paterson Untitled by Rob McLennan
8	Nov 9	Tell It Like It Is: Dialogue and subtext	Craft Reading: "How I Learned to Write Dialogue by Reviewing Police Complaints" by K Chess Literature Readings: "Gulliver's Wife" by Philip Huynh

Week	Date	Topic	Readings Due (links on LEARN and in reading journal)
9	Nov 16	Walk Me Through It: Community-based and participatory art	Craft Reading: Danez Smith and Kaveh Ahkbar in Conversation Literature Readings: "One-room apartment above the grocery store" by Chelene Knight "The Country" by Billy Collins "Girl" by Jamaica Kincaid "Grass" by Carrienne Leung
10	Nov 23	Peer workshops	Craft Reading: "25 Essential Notes on Craft" by Matthew Salesses"
11	Nov 30	"Fail Better": strategies for revision	Craft Reading: Poetry Foundation article "The Warmth of the Messy Page" Literature Readings: "What, of this Goldfish, Would You Wish?" by Etgar Keret
12	Dec 7	Guest artist visit and course wrap up	Craft Reading: "Ten of My Recommendations for Good Writing Habits" by Lydia Davis Literature Readings: Guest author's book(s) (tbd)

IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER

Date

Tuesday, October 5 (by midnight)

Monday, October 18 (by 9:00am)

Wednesday, October 20 (by midnight)

Tuesday, October 26 (by midnight)

Sunday, November 14 (by midnight)

Sunday, November 21 (by 9:00am)

Tuesday, November 30 (by midnight)

December 9

Assignment

Submit your draft for peer feedback

Workshop 1 peer feedback sheets due for your group

First writing portfolio hand-in (all writing assignments up to that point)

Submit your draft for instructor feedback *

Submit your draft for peer feedback

Workshop 2 peer feedback sheets due for your group

Submit your draft for instructor feedback *

Second writing portfolio hand-in (all remaining writing assignments)

Final revision due, (revised draft and revision analysis sheet)

Reading-response journal entries are due before class each week. Please do the weekly quiz to confirm that you were able to complete all the material.

*Pick one date only.

POLICY ON LATE WORK, MISSED ASSIGNMENTS, AND MAKE-UP TESTS

With workshop draft submissions and workshop feedback sheets, late submissions will lose 10% per day to a maximum of 3 days. No assignments will be accepted later than this and a grade of zero will be awarded. Any arrangements for exceeding circumstances are at the discretion of the instructor.

With all other assignments, I am amenable to a one-week grace period. Further extensions only available with advance instructor approval.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Students are encouraged to attend the synchronous class times over Zoom. A recording of each class will be made available for two weeks. Students unable to attend the synchronous times will be required to watch the video and complete the work on their own. All students are required to complete the asynchronous learning tasks.

CORRESPONDENCE

Please email me with your questions or concerns. I try to return emails within 24 hours during the week and within 48 hours on weekends. Office hours this semester are by appointment only, usually on Mondays and Tuesdays. Please email me to book a time.

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION:

Academic Integrity: In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo community are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. [Check www.uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/ for more information.]

Grievance: A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of their university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read the St. Jerome's University Policy on Student Petitions and Grievances, www.sju.ca/sites/default/files/upload_file/PLCY_AOM_Student-Petitions-and-Grievances_20151211-SJUSCAproved.pdf. When in doubt, please be certain to contact the St. Jerome's Advising Specialist, Student Affairs Office, who will provide further assistance.

Discipline: A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing an academic offence, and to take responsibility for their actions. [Check www.uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/ for more information.] A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about "rules" for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course instructor, academic advisor, or the Associate Dean. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under the St. Jerome's University Policy on Student Discipline, www.sju.ca/sites/default/files/PLCY_AOM_Student-Discipline_20131122-SJUSCAproved.pdf. For information on categories of offences and types of penalties, students should refer to University of Waterloo Policy 71, Student Discipline, www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm. For typical penalties, check the Guidelines for the Assessment of Penalties, www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/guidelines/penaltyguidelines.htm.

Appeals: A decision made or penalty imposed under the St. Jerome's University Policy on Student Petitions and Grievances (other than a petition) or the St. Jerome's University Policy on Student Discipline may be appealed if there is a ground. A student who believes they have a ground for an appeal should refer to the St. Jerome's University Policy on Student Appeals, www.sju.ca/sites/default/files/PLCY_AOM_Student-Appeals_20131122-SJUSCAproved.pdf.

Note for students with disabilities: AccessAbility Services, located in Needles Hall (Room 1401) at the University of Waterloo, collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with AccessAbility Services at the beginning of each academic term, www.uwaterloo.ca/accessability-services/.